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# REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATING TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: AN INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

## Information received from the United Nations system

## The World Bank and indigenous peoples

### The World Bank

1. The World Bank[1] provides loans for programmes that cover a range of development and economic activities aimed at reducing poverty and improving living standards in the developing world with programmes in areas such as agriculture, road construction, forestry, education and the environment. The World Bank also provides funding for development-related projects which directly assist the world's most disadvantaged populations, including indigenous peoples. A significant number of projects that have been launched to benefit indigenous peoples include land and judicial reform, building the human capital of indigenous communities (education, health and social protection) and strengthening the social capital of indigenous organizations and communities. Bank projects also promote and preserve the cultural heritage, language and identities of indigenous peoples.

2. The World Bank is among the world's largest sources of development assistance. The Bank uses its financial resources, its highly trained staff and its extensive knowledge base to individually help each developing country onto a path of stable, sustainable and equitable growth. The Bank's mission is a global fight against poverty which aims to ensure that people everywhere have a chance for a better life for themselves and for their children. Through its loans, policy advice and technical assistance, the World Bank supports a broad range of

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programmes aimed at reducing poverty and improving living standards in the developing world. Effective poverty reduction strategies and poverty-focused lending are central to achieving these objectives. Bank programmes also give high priority to sustainable environmental, social and human development as well as strengthened economic management, with a growing emphasis on inclusion, governance and institution-building. The Bank sees poverty reduction as intrinsically linked to both environmental and social sustainability.

3. The World Bank was founded in 1944 and is owned by 183 member countries whose views and interests are represented by a Board of Governors and a Washington-based Board of Executive Directors. Member countries are shareholders who carry ultimate decision-making power at the Bank. Under the Bank's Articles of Agreement, the World Bank can only lend to a member Government or under a member Government's guarantee. However, the Bank encourages Governments to work closely with non-governmental and community-based organizations to strengthen participation of local people affected by Bank-financed projects.

**The World Bank and indigenous peoples**

4. Indigenous peoples have historically been the poorest and most excluded populations in many parts of the world. Some sources estimate that there are over 200 million indigenous peoples worldwide living in more than 70 countries. They have not only faced serious discrimination in terms of their basic rights to property, language, culture and citizenship, but also in terms of access to basic services and essential material conditions for a satisfying life. In many countries there exists a high correlation between poverty and being indigenous, and the socio-economic conditions and access to basic social services are significantly worse for the indigenous peoples than for the non-indigenous population.

5. The Bank's commitment to addressing the poverty and marginalization of indigenous peoples is activated by:

- Engaging in policy dialogue with borrower Governments and other stakeholders through applying the Bank's indigenous peoples policy;

- Financing development projects which benefit indigenous peoples;

- Strengthening of borrower institutions and indigenous peoples' organizations; and

- Building a knowledge base on development issues to be shared with all stakeholders.

**The World Bank's indigenous peoples policy**

6. The World Bank's indigenous peoples policy is one of 10 safeguard policies[2] introduced to ensure that the projects it finances avoid or mitigate adverse social and environmental impacts on indigenous peoples and that the project benefits are tailored to their specific needs.

7. The World Bank was the first multilateral institution to introduce a special policy for the treatment of indigenous or tribal peoples in development projects. The Bank's first policy directive concerning indigenous peoples, "Tribal people in Bank-financed projects", was issued

in 1982 and was initially designed to address issues relating to isolated tribal groups. The directive recognized the need to adopt special measures to safeguard the interests of tribal people in World Bank-financed projects which affected the environmental or social situation of tribal communities. The directive focused on the protection of land rights and the provision of health services, particularly in relation to forest-dwelling indigenous groups affected by World Bank-financed projects in lowland South America.

8. In 1991, the World Bank adopted Operational Directive (OD) 4.20, which established measures to incorporate indigenous peoples' concerns into Bank-financed projects to ensure that indigenous peoples benefit from development projects. While OD 4.20 maintained the protective measures of the earlier directive, the new policy specifically promoted the rights of indigenous peoples to participate in, and benefit from, the development process.

9. Specifically, the World Bank's indigenous peoples policy requires that:

Indigenous peoples are given a voice in projects that affect them;

Adverse impacts on indigenous peoples are avoided, or if that is not possible, minimized or mitigated; and

Project benefits are tailored to the specific needs of indigenous peoples.

OD 4.20 introduced four important new elements into the World Bank's activities relating to indigenous peoples:

The OD identifies indigenous peoples as groups who maintain social and cultural identities distinct from those of the national societies in which they live, who have close attachments to their ancestral lands, who speak an indigenous language and who are vulnerable to being disadvantaged in the development process;

The OD recognizes the need to protect indigenous peoples against potential harm or damage from development projects and promotes indigenous participation in the development process;

The OD identifies funding for technical assistance to strengthen government institutions and indigenous communities to address the needs of indigenous peoples;

The OD requires that indigenous peoples are consulted and that their views and concerns are incorporated in all Bank-funded projects which affect the lands, resources and cultures of indigenous peoples.

10. The World Bank's policy direction concerning indigenous peoples reflects an increased awareness of the need to promote indigenous participation in development-related activities and to protect indigenous peoples' rights to their lands, resources, ethnic identities and cultural autonomy.

11. Currently, the Bank is in the process of converting all of its Safeguard Operational Directives - basic policy statements guiding projects - to a new format, that of Operational Policies (OP). The new format more clearly differentiates those aspects of policy and procedure which are mandatory from those aspects which are considered non-mandatory "good practice". It also separates out required Bank procedures into a separate document.

12. As part of this process, the Indigenous Peoples Policy is being converted from OD 4.20 to OP/BP 4.10. External consultations on draft versions of OP/BP 4.10 took place between July 2001 and February 2002. During that period the Bank participated in 32 consultation meetings with stakeholders (borrower Governments, indigenous peoples' organizations, NGOs, academics, and development institutions) from more than 35 countries in all of the Bank's six regions. Additionally, consultations were carried out in international forums and electronically through the web. The current policy revision will be completed based on this external input as well as discussions with internal stakeholders, including the Bank's Executive Directors.

13. The broad objective of revised draft OP 4.10 is to ensure that the development process fosters full respect for the dignity, human rights and cultures of indigenous peoples, thereby contributing to the Bank's mission of poverty reduction and sustainable development. The draft OP/BP 4.10 strengthens the mandatory provisions in comparison to the current OD 4.20 by:

Providing clearer provisions for early and meaningful consultation and informed participation of affected groups. The borrower and the Bank must take into account the results of consultations when deciding whether to proceed with project processing;

Mandating mechanisms not only to avoid adverse impacts, but also to tailor benefits to indigenous peoples;

Adding new mandatory requirements regarding the commercial use of natural resources (including forest, mineral and hydro-carbon resources) on lands owned, or customarily used, by indigenous groups; and

Adding new mandatory requirements regarding the commercial use of cultural resources (including indigenous knowledge).

**World Bank projects benefiting indigenous peoples**

14. As of April 2002, 233 of the World Bank's active projects involved indigenous peoples' issues and another 15 projects in the pipeline are anticipated to involve indigenous peoples. Within the framework of OD 4.20, the World Bank is assisting indigenous peoples in five main areas of activities: projects in the Bank's six regions,[3] the Global Environmental Facility, the institutional strengthening of borrower and indigenous peoples' organizations, the Small Grants Programme and building a knowledge base on indigenous peoples' issues.

*The Regions*

15. *World Bank projects in the African Region*: The World Bank's activities in the African region are focusing on promoting greater awareness of the role of indigenous knowledge systems and institutions in the development process, particularly in relation to natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. Although Bank projects in the African region have not affected indigenous peoples directly, the Bank has implemented projects involving hunting/gathering peoples, including the San of southern Africa, the various "Dorobo" and other hunting peoples of eastern Africa and the pygmy peoples of central and west central Africa. One example of such projects is the Rwanda Food Security and Social Action project, which was implemented in the 43 poorest communes of Rwanda.

16. *World Bank projects in the East Asia and Pacific region*: The World Bank is currently supporting 56 projects in the Asia and Pacific region involving indigenous peoples in areas such as forestry management, education, community development, conservation and natural resources management. In Viet Nam, for instance, the World Bank is supporting the Agricultural Diversification Project, which safeguards the interests of "ethnic minorities" through land allocation based on current land use and participatory land use planning. In Indonesia, recent Bank-financed projects in road construction, forestry and rural health are being designed to take into account the needs of "isolated indigenous populations". A series of education projects have been designed to support the provision of educational services tailored to the specific needs of "national minorities". Also, a number of community development projects are being implemented or prepared in Indonesia, Viet Nam, the Philippines and Laos with specific measures and design features to ensure the participation of indigenous peoples in culturally appropriate manners.

17. *World Bank projects in the Europe and Central Asia region*: Indigenous peoples in the Europe and Central Asia region are primarily located in the northern and arctic regions of the Russian Federation. Although Bank projects in this region have not affected indigenous peoples directly, two oil rehabilitation projects have brought indirect benefits to the indigenous populations by rehabilitating pipelines that had caused significant environmental degradation in areas inhabited by indigenous peoples. Preparation is under way for a project funded by the Global Environmental Facility to help control forest fires in Siberia and the Far East. The Bank is also starting work on a study of options for sustainable development in indigenous areas, which may result in a lending operation.

18. *World Bank projects in the Latin America and Caribbean region*: There are currently 110 projects involving indigenous peoples in this region. The number of Bank projects annually identified as affecting indigenous peoples in this region grew from one in 1992 to 27 in 2001.

19. Examples of projects in the Latin America and Caribbean region include:

Natural resource management projects in Columbia, Peru and Mexico which contain special land components;

Land regularization projects in Brazil, Honduras and Bolivia; the Indigenous Lands Project of the Pilot Program to Protect the Brazilian Rain Forest is specially designed to address issues of indigenous land demarcation and protection in the Brazilian Amazon;

Community-based development in indigenous and Afro-Latino groups in Ecuador, Peru, Argentina and Bolivia.

20. *World Bank projects in the Middle East and North Africa region*: The Matruh Natural Resource Management Project in Egypt is the World Bank's first project in the Middle East and North Africa region designed to address indigenous needs. This project promotes land use knowledge and participation of the Bedouin people, particularly Bedouin women, in the areas of natural resource management and rural development planning. No other projects have been identified to date in the region as affecting groups defined as indigenous peoples according to the World Bank policy.

21. *World Bank projects in the South Asia region*: A large number of projects (56) in the South Asia region involve indigenous peoples (48 in India, 2 each in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal and one in Sri Lanka). Currently, the health and forestry and natural resource subsectors as well as newly initiated projects such as the District Poverty Initiative and Rural Water Project have addressed the concerns of indigenous peoples.

22. The *India-Rajasthan District Poverty Initiatives Project* is based on the development of institutional capacity for participatory planning and implementation of small subprojects to fulfil the priority economic and social needs of the indigenous peoples. It involves:

Mobilizing groups of poor people, including tribal people, and enabling them to voice demand, choose, plan and execute poverty-reducing interventions;

Improving the abilities of district and subdistrict agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, to "hear", reach and serve poor clients, thereby increasing their access to social and economic infrastructure and services; and

Increasing their earnings by enhancing skills and expanding employment opportunities.

*Global Environmental Facility partnership*

23. The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) (of which the World Bank is one of three implementing agencies, along with UNDP and UNEP), a financial mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity, funds projects that deal with conservation, sustainable use and benefit-sharing. GEF projects facilitate full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities. As of fiscal year 2001, GEF provided over $341 million to 56 projects in 39 countries in which indigenous communities are involved in the design and implementation of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use activities. With co-financing, the total mobilized is more than $800 million, all of which helps support over 252 different ethnic and tribal populations around the developing world.

**Institutional strengthening of borrower and indigenous peoples' organizations**

24. *Institutional Development Fund (IDF) grants*: The World Bank is also working to strengthen the capacities of agencies responsible for providing services to indigenous peoples, as well as the capacity of indigenous communities and organizations to define and manage their own development programmes. The IDF strives to create a learning partnership among indigenous peoples, Governments and donor agencies. In the Latin America and Caribbean region alone, IDF investments add more than $2 million to support 15 training projects in 10 different countries and to assist in development planning and learning-by-doing methodologies. A number of IDF grants are planned to provide support for institutional capacity building of lead ministries or government agencies responsible for indigenous peoples' issues.

*Small Grants Programme*

25. The Small Grants Programme provides grants to civil society organizations and is administered through participating World Bank Country Offices. The Programme supports activities of civil society organizations, including indigenous peoples' organizations, in promoting dialogue, disseminating information and fostering partnerships among these organizations. Specific activities supported by the Programme include:

A dialogue to promote the recovery of cultural identity of indigenous peoples of Peru; and

An international workshop on legal anthropology for the rights of indigenous peoples of Russia.

*Building a knowledge base on indigenous peoples' issues*

26. *Carrying out research and sector work*: the World Bank's research and sector work is another programme area addressing the needs of indigenous peoples. The World Bank's children's initiative produced a series of country profiles which focus on children and emphasize the special needs of indigenous children. There have been several studies on education and poverty alleviation of indigenous peoples in Latin America, including indigenous peoples' profiles for several Central American countries. In collaboration with other partners, the region carried out case studies of indigenous community development. It also commissioned a number of legal studies on Central America, Guyana, Peru, Argentina and Venezuela.

27. The World Bank's Legal and Social Development Departments prepared legal and socio-economic profiles of indigenous peoples in a number of Asian countries to assist the Bank's performance in relation to indigenous peoples. The Asia region conducted research in the areas of indigenous knowledge, protection of intellectual property rights and biodiversity conservation. Related to these concerns, a study was conducted on culturally appropriate health and education services for minority nationalities in Yunnan Province, China.

28. The World Bank's Social Development Family is seeking to increase the participation of indigenous and other local communities in private sector investment projects, while the Environment Department has been involved in research and sector work concerning indigenous

peoples, particularly in relation to natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. It produced a series of technical notes, including one which pertains to "Participation and indigenous peoples."

29. *Development Gateway*: The Development Gateway is an interactive Internet portal for information on sustainable development and poverty reduction, offering a common space for dialogue and knowledge sharing. It facilitates access to information and provides a space where communities can share experiences in development efforts.

30. The main objectives of the interactive Internet portal are (i) to facilitate a dialogue among indigenous leaders about such topics as sustainable development, cultural diversity and indigenous peoples' development, (ii) to promote the participation of indigenous peoples in international policy dialogue and (iii) to foster information exchange among indigenous peoples, international organizations, Governments and civil society.

**Contact us**

To find out more about World Bank activities relating to indigenous peoples, please contact either your nearest World Bank office or the central World Bank office in Washington, D.C. (the Quality Assurance and Compliance Unit in the Bank's Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Network). Address your correspondence to:

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Notes

[1] "The World Bank" refers here to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA).

[2] Environmental Assessment, Safety of Dams, Natural Habitats, Pest Management, Forestry, Involuntary Resettlement, Projects in Disputed Areas, Projects on International Waterways, Physical Cultural Resources and Indigenous Peoples.

[3] Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, South Asia.

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# REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES OF UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATING TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: AN INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

**Information received from the United Nations system**

## Overview of current indigenous related activities of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

### What is FAO?

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was founded in 1945 with a mandate to raise levels of nutrition and standards of living, to improve agricultural productivity and to better the condition of rural populations. Today, FAO is one of the largest specialized agencies in the United Nations system and the lead agency for agriculture, forestry, fisheries and rural development. An intergovernmental organization, FAO has 183 member countries plus one member organization, the European Community. Since its inception, FAO has worked to alleviate poverty and hunger by promoting agricultural development, improved nutrition and the pursuit of food security - defined as the access of all people at all times to the food they need for an active and healthy life.

2. FAO is governed by the Conference of member nations, which meets every two years to review the work carried out by the Organization and approve a Programme of Work and Budget for the next biennium. The Conference elects a Council of 49 member nations to act as an

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interim governing body. Members serve three-year, rotating terms. The Conference also elects the Director-General to head the agency. The current Director-General, Dr. Jacques Diouf, of Senegal, began a six-year term in January 1994 and was re-elected to a second term of six years, which began in January 2000. FAO is composed of eight departments: Administration and Finance, Agriculture, Economic and Social, Fisheries, Forestry, General Affairs and Information, Sustainable Development and Technical Cooperation. FAO has a permanent personnel establishment of about 3,500 staff members - 1,500 professional and 2,000 general service staff - and maintains 5 regional offices, 5 subregional offices, 5 liaison offices and 78 country offices, in addition to its headquarters in Rome.

3. The Organization's work falls into two broad categories: the Regular Programme and the Field Programme.

4. The Regular Programme covers a variety of activities of general interest to the membership, including support for fieldwork and advice to Governments on policy and planning, and also includes special "windows" to finance development projects. It is funded by member countries, which contribute according to levels set by the Conference. For the biennium 2002-2003, the Conference approved a budget of US$ 651.7 million.

5. The Field Programme gives concrete shape to FAO development strategies, providing assistance mainly through projects that are usually undertaken in cooperation with national Governments and other agencies. In 1999, approximately 77 per cent of Field Programme finances came from national trust funds and 9 per cent from the United Nations Development Programme. FAO contributes about 13 per cent through its Technical Cooperation Programme and 1 per cent through its Special Programme for Food Security, both under the Regular Programme budget.

6. Since 1994, FAO has undergone the most significant restructuring since its founding to decentralize operations, streamline procedures and reduce costs. Savings approximating US$ 50 million a year have been realized. Highlights of the reforms include:

Increased emphasis on food security;

Decentralization to regional and subregional offices;

Increased use of experts from developing countries and countries in transition;

Broadened links with the private sector and non-governmental organizations;

Greater electronic access to FAO statistical databases and documents.

7. In 1999, the Conference approved a "Strategic framework 2000-2015". It was developed through extensive consultations with member nations and other FAO stakeholders and provides the blueprint for the Organization's future programmes, progressively refined in the context of a rolling medium-term planning process covering six years.

**What FAO does**

*Development assistance*

8. FAO gives practical help to developing countries and countries in transition through a wide range of technical assistance projects. The Organization encourages an integrated approach, with environmental, social and economic considerations included in the formulation of development projects.

*Information*

9. FAO collects, analyses, interprets and disseminates information relating to nutrition, food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The Organization serves as a clearing-house, providing farmers, scientists, government planners, traders and non-governmental organizations with the information they need to make rational decisions on planning, investment, marketing, research and training.

*Advice to Governments*

10. Drawing on its widespread information networks and the skills and experience of its technical staff, FAO provides independent advice on agricultural policy and planning, and on the administrative and legal structures needed for development. The organization also advises on national strategies for rural development, food security and the alleviation of poverty.

*Neutral forum*

11. FAO provides a neutral forum where all nations can meet to discuss and cooperate in relation to major food and agriculture issues. FAO approves international standards and helps frame international conventions and agreements. It also hosts major conferences, technical meetings and consultations of experts.

12. In connection with the establishment of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, FAO has appointed the Land Tenure Service (Paul Munro-Faure, Chief of the Service) as focal point for these issues.

**An overview of the indigenous related activities of FAO**

13. FAO works with indigenous people and their organizations in many of its Regular Programme activities. Indigenous issues are an integral part of the work of numerous organizational units, including those working in household food security and nutrition, fisheries, forestry, land, water, plant production and protection, livestock, agricultural support systems and legal advice, as well as units dealing with participation, rural institutions and land tenure.

14. The programmes and activities involving indigenous people (including traditional communities) include:

Indigenous land husbandry;

Biodiversity, including global programmes on plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture;

Farmer field schools;

Farmers' rights;

Nutrition and household food security;

Food insecurity and vulnerability profiling and mapping;

Sustainable forest management;

Development law;

Land tenure;

Rural institutions and participation;

Gender, population and indigenous knowledge;

Research, extension and training.

More detailed information on these activities is found in the annex to this briefing note.*

15. The FAO Field Programme is also involved with indigenous issues. The Technical Cooperation Department has overall responsibility for the operational activities of FAO, including policy assistance, investment support and the overall management of activities associated with the formulation and implementation of in-country, subregional and regional programmes and projects, including those in response to a natural or man-made disaster.

16. The Policy Assistance Division is the main channel for providing member countries with policy advice related to national development policies, programmes and strategies aimed at creating a favourable economic environment for food security and agricultural and rural development. The Division also assists countries in developing their national capacity in the field of policy analysis and formulation through policy training.

17. The Investment Centre Division has the role of aiding FAO member countries to reach their investment goals in support of enhanced and sustainable agricultural and rural development through its cooperative agreements with 20 international agencies that provide financing and grants for agricultural and rural development projects and programmes, as well as food aid. These include the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, all regional and subregional development banks, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the United Nations Capital Development Fund and the World Food Programme.

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* The annex of the report is available in English only.

18. The Field Operations Division manages and mobilizes resources for technical cooperation projects, including in the framework of the Special Programme for Food Security, and for various relief operations.

19. In collaboration with the technical departments of FAO and partner agencies, the Technical Cooperation Department takes account of the needs of indigenous people in various degrees according to the specific contexts of its operations. For example, the project formulation work by the Investment Centre Division takes into consideration the financing institutions' safeguard policies governing the indigenous population.

**Indigenous issues and the World Food Summit: five years later**

20. FAO will host a global meeting at its Rome headquarters from 10 to 13 June 2002 to review progress towards ending hunger. The meeting, the "World Food Summit: five years later", is meant to track progress achieved since the 1996 World Food Summit and consider ways to accelerate the process.

21. The summit was originally scheduled to be held from 5 to 9 November 2001, but was postponed in the aftermath of the 11 September attacks in the United States. "The purpose of this event is to give new impetus to worldwide efforts on behalf of hungry people", says Dr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO. "We must raise both the political will and the financial resources to fight hunger. The international community has repeatedly declared that it is dedicated to the eradication of poverty. Eliminating hunger is a vital first step."

22. Indigenous peoples' organizations are participating fully in the preparations for the World Food Summit: five years later. A focal point for indigenous peoples' organizations is a member of the International Non-Government Organizations/Civil Society Organizations Planning Committee for the World Food Summit: five years later, which is responsible also for preparation of the NGO Forum which will take place in parallel to the Summit. The quota system applied for accreditation to the Forum will ensure that a fair proportion (9.4 per cent) of the 606 delegates represent indigenous peoples from the various regions. In preparation for the World Food Summit: five years later, FAO is providing support for an international consultation of indigenous peoples on the right to food which will be held in Guatemala from 17 to 19 April 2002.

**Indigenous issues, FAO and the World Summit on Sustainable Development**

23. FAO is responsible for coordinating and reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development on progress in its role as task manager for several chapters of Agenda 21 (including chapter 10 on integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources, chapter 11 on combating deforestation, chapter 13 on managing fragile ecosystems: sustainable mountain development and chapter 14 on promoting sustainable agricultural and rural development). This responsibility includes liaison, inter alia with NGOs and indigenous peoples as identified major groups for the implementation of Agenda 21. Liaison with these major groups is an important activity through the various stages and meetings in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg in 2002.

**Indigenous issues related to sustainable development in mountains and the International Year of Mountains 2002**

24. Mountain regions are home to many indigenous and traditional communities. Indigenous knowledge and experience is often a key component of land use systems practised in mountain areas and needs to be fully incorporated in strategies and programmes for sustainable mountain development. As the lead agency for the International Year of Mountains 2002, FAO is encouraging and assisting countries to establish national committees to plan observance of the Year and to initiate national strategies for mountain areas. This includes promoting full participation of indigenous groups as members of national committees and in developing strategies and programmes that adequately consider their particular knowledge, needs and circumstances.

**Annex**

**REGULAR PROGRAMME AREAS OF RELEVANCE TO INDIGENOUS ISSUES**

| Lead department | Activity | Brief description |
|---|---|---|
| Agriculture | Indigenous land husbandry | In its work in the areas of policy and planning and in the management and development of land and water resources, the Land and Water Development Division actively promotes participatory approaches to enhance the active involvement in decision-making by all concerned stakeholders including poor farmers, indigenous groups and local communities. This is exemplified through farmer field school approaches for capacity-building and participatory technology development for improved land and water resources management that are being advocated through the Division's projects and activities in sub-Saharan Africa.<br><br>The Land and Water Development Division has developed guidelines and a CD-ROM with extensive training material on participatory training and extension in land and water management. The approaches are developed within the framework of the Special Programme for Food Security and address the specific needs of indigenous people by reviewing their livelihood assets and priorities.<br><br>The Land and Water Development Division has prepared a project concept note for a Global Environment Facility-United Nations Development Fund (GEF/UNDP) project on Globally Important Indigenous Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS). The aim of this project is to identify and mobilize recognition and conservation of globally important agricultural heritage systems and landscapes and their associated agricultural biodiversity and knowledge systems and to enhance the local, national and global benefits derived through their management and conservation. FAO would liaise closely with indigenous groups in this endeavour.<br><br>FAO contributed to the Report of the World Commission on Dams, which recommends specific principles when dealing with indigenous issues (prior informed consent). |

| Lead department | Activity | Brief description |
|---|---|---|
| | Biodiversity, including global programmes on plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture | In its programme on biodiversity for food and agriculture which contributes to the implementation of the work programme of the Convention on Biological Diversity on agricultural biodiversity, FAO places great importance on the conservation and sustainable use of farmers' plant varieties and landraces and domestic animal breeds and races that have been developed and adapted over generations by local and indigenous communities to suit their socio-economic context and biophysical conditions. FAO is coordinating the preparation of country reports, which will contribute to the First Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources. Emphasis is placed on the maintenance of sustainable and diverse farming systems that not only ensure the maintenance of ecosystem functions such as nutrient cycling and water quality but also ensure risk management from threats such as drought, pest and disease. |
| | Farmer field schools | The Global Integrated Pest Management Facility hosted by the Plant Protection Service continues to support Andean small-scale farmers, Quichua/Quechua "Indios" in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. Furthermore, different ethnic minorities living in Viet Nam and growing, inter alia, rain-fed rice benefit from farmer field school programmes.<br><br>Indigenous farmer communities often have limited resource bases and mostly produce for subsistence. The Integrated Production and Pest Management Farmers Field Schools (IPPM-FFS) contribute to improved food security and poverty alleviation by empowering farmers to enhance their knowledge in order to optimize the efficiency of their limited resources. IPPM allows farmers to minimize dependence on costly agro-chemicals that have a negative impact on environment and health. Field schools integrate traditional local knowledge and broader ecological principles and improve their environment through prevention of contamination. |

| Lead department | Activity | Brief description |
|---|---|---|
| | Farmers' rights | The plant genetic resources on which world food security depends have been developed for over 10,000 years by farmers and farming communities. These crops, from their centres of origin, have been exchanged all over the world, and farmers have selected and acclimatized them in a wide variety of environments and of specific needs. In the process, through this communal effort, they have built up the portfolio of intra-specific diversity that is contained in traditional farming systems. Countries are interdependent in regard to these resources, which are the raw material for all plant improvement by farmers and their communities, by plant breeders and through biotechnology.<br><br>In the context of the FAO International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which was the first international agreement for the conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources, the 1989 FAO Conference, by resolution 5/89, considering that, in the history of mankind, unnumbered generations of farmers had conserved, improved and made available plant genetic resources, endorsed Farmers' Rights, defined as meaning "rights arising from the past, present and future contributions of farmers in conserving, improving, and making available plant genetic resources, particularly those in the centres of origin/diversity", with the aim of "ensuring full benefits to farmers, and supporting the continuation of their contributions", in order to "assist farmers and farming communities, in all regions of the world, but especially in the areas of origin/diversity of plant genetic resources, in the protection and conservation of their plant genetic resources, and of the natural biosphere" and "to allow farmers, their communities, and countries in all regions, to participate fully in the benefits derived, at present and in the future, from the improved use of plant genetic resources, through plant breeding and other scientific methods". The resolution aimed to balance the rights of the informal innovators, whose crops provide the basic material for modern plant technology, with those of the developers of plant varieties under forms of intellectual property. |

| Lead department | Activity | Brief description |
|---|---|---|
| | | On 3 November 2001, after seven years of intergovernmental negotiations in the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to revise the International Undertaking in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity, the FAO Conference adopted the new binding International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The Treaty, which will enter into force upon ratification by 40 countries, makes specific provision for the recognition of Farmers' Rights in article 9, which reads as follows:<br><br>9.1 The Contracting Parties recognize the enormous contribution that the local and indigenous communities and farmers of all regions of the world, particularly those in the centres of origin and crop diversity, have made and will continue to make for the conservation and development of plant genetic resources which constitute the basis of food and agriculture production throughout the world.<br><br>9.2 The Contracting Parties agree that the responsibility for realizing Farmers' Rights, as they relate to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, rests with national Governments. In accordance with their needs and priorities, each Contracting Party should, as appropriate, and subject to its national legislation, take measures to protect and promote Farmers' Rights, including:<br><br>(a) Protection of traditional knowledge relevant to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture;<br><br>(b) The right to equitably participate in sharing benefits arising from the utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture; and<br><br>(c) The right to participate in making decisions, at the national level, on matters related to the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. |

| Lead department | Activity | Brief description |
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| | | 9.3 Nothing in this article shall be interpreted to limit any rights that farmers have to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed/propagating material, subject to national law and as appropriate.<br><br>Moreover, the Treaty, in its preamble, affirms that "the past, present and future contribution of farmers in all regions of the world, particularly those in centres of origin and diversity, in conserving, improving and making available these resources, is the basis of Farmers' Rights", and that "the rights recognized in this Treaty to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed and other propagating material, and to participate in decision-making regarding, and in the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from, the use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, are fundamental to the realization of Farmers' Rights, as well as the promotion of Farmers' Rights at national and international levels". |
| | Processing and storage | The Agricultural Support Systems Division, through the Information Network on Post Harvest Operations (INPHO), has consolidated, documented and disseminated information on the traditional processing and storage of a number of foods which are locally grown in developing countries (see at http://www.fao.org/inpho). Much of the information presented in INPHO relates to developing and improving traditional practices. The World Intellectual Property Organization has supported this initiative on the principle that it provides a basis for identifying indigenous technologies and protecting them. |
| Economic and Social | Nutrition and household food security | The Food and Nutrition Division is systematically incorporating the identification and targeting of indigenous groups and the use of indigenous knowledge and resources in its community-based nutrition programme work. A methodology and procedures for documenting traditional food systems of indigenous peoples have been developed in collaboration with the Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE) of McGill University, Canada. Through this partnership, FAO has worked with indigenous peoples in Thailand, China and Bangladesh on the identification and re-introduction of the consumption of native foods with good potential for alleviating micronutrient deficiencies, and particularly vitamin A. |

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| | | The Food and Nutrition Division is also collaborating with the Asian Vegetable Research Development Centre through its Africa Branch in Tanzania on the identification and domestication of indigenous vegetables, some of which are traditionally known and used for addressing micronutrient deficiencies.<br><br>With support from FAO, the INFOODS Regional Data Centres are carrying out work related to analysing foods of indigenous peoples and compiling those data in national food composition databases and printed food tables. |
| | Food insecurity and vulnerability profiling and mapping | As part of the Food and Nutrition Division's Nutrition Country Profiling work, subnational nutrition and household food security information related to indigenous groups is systematically incorporated in the profiles. In 2001, the Agriculture and Economic Development Analysis Division carried out special vulnerable group profiling exercises in mountain areas of Viet Nam and Guatemala which are largely inhabited by indigenous groups. Vulnerable group profiles are being prepared for Nepal and Ethiopia and a special paper on mountain people has been prepared in the Department in the context of the International Year of Mountains.<br><br>The Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS) programme is integrating information on food insecure and vulnerable groups at the national and subnational levels. FIVIMS is designed to capture information on indigenous peoples as they are often amongst the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Indigenous peoples' organizations are among the various stakeholders involved in the FIVIMS process. |

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| Forestry | Sustainable forest management | Participation and empowerment of indigenous people in sustainable forest management is an integral part of the efforts of the Forestry Department. Specific examples include:<br><br>For agricultural and timber products, certification and benefit sharing mechanisms have been established in order to monitor and evaluate the ecologically friendly, economically viable and/or socially equitable use of these products. Criteria and indicators have been elaborated, against which production and commercialization are assessed.<br><br>Fair trade schemes and benefit sharing arrangements focus on social aspects of trade and the adequate sharing of benefits among stakeholders, including local and indigenous communities.<br><br>Non-wood forest products (NWFP) have only recently been incorporated in some of these mechanisms. The relevance of these mechanisms for the sustainable use of NWFP is being analysed and the methods used to assess the sustainable production and commercialization of NWFP are being tested and documented.<br><br>In forest extension the emphasis is on demonstrating multi-partnership extension models for the forest sector; supply chains for timber and NWFP that demonstrate principles of sustainable forest management, and social and economic equity; and the generation of mechanisms for enhancing market access of tree and forest product users and gatherers. Indigenous peoples being the custodians of much of the physical and intellectual wealth of forests, are the instrumental partner in many such initiatives.<br><br>In the Forests, Trees and People Programme (FTPP), there is a commitment to the betterment of indigenous/local forest users in Asia, Latin America and Africa through thematic support in conflict management, marketing analysis and development, participatory processes, and gender. FTPP support to partners |

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| | | includes: alliances to promote the community forestry bill addressing fundamental rights of hill tribes in northern Thailand; the Indigenous, Peasant and Afro-American Co-ordination for Community Agroforestry which facilitates indigenous people's experimentation in community forestry and in Peru supports the development of the guidelines for effective management from indigenous perspective in conjunction with COICAP (Coordinadora Agroforestal Campesina e Indigena del Peru) and the World Wildlife Fund.<br><br>In Latin America, particularly Honduras, the indigenous communities, through their representatives, have been involved in the participatory mechanisms that enable them to put forward their own demands and expectations in relation to forestry policies, laws and regulations.<br><br>With regard to support provided to countries in developing status and action plans for forest genetic resources, indigenous peoples are among the local people involved in programmes on forest biological diversity. In addition, the Forestry Department's programmes on genetic resources and forest biological diversity support action under article 8 (j) on traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of the Convention on Biological Diversity. |
| Office of the Legal Counsel | Development law | The Development Law Service provides assistance in law reform in the technical areas of the Organization's work to member countries, upon request. Customary rights of access to and use of land, water, forestry and fisheries resources, which are traditionally exercised by rural communities either individually or collectively, are taken into consideration both in the legislative review and the legal reform processes that are supported by the Service. Given their particular relevance to the specific needs and circumstances of local populations and indigenous peoples in many countries, these rights are often formally recognized and guaranteed in national legislation on natural resource management. |

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| Sustainable Development | Land tenure | The Land Tenure Service's publication, *Land Reform Land Settlement and Cooperatives*, frequently includes papers directly relating to indigenous land issues. In 2000, for example, the first volume included "Recognition of ancestral domain claims on Palawan Island, the Philippines: is there a future?" The second volume of 2000 contains a paper entitled "Indigenous highlands in transition: the case of Ha Giang province in Northern Vietnam." The first volume for 2001 includes a paper on indigenous rights in Canada, "Canadian land reform: an overview of Aboriginal rights and land settlement claims." Indigenous land issues are included in the Service's major outputs for 2002-2003: "Assistance to land tenure modifications under indigenous and common property resource management systems, for balanced rural development." This activity focuses on the African Lusophone countries, where the Service also has considerable field involvement; on indigenous pastoralism regimes in the Near East; and on preparing guidelines for negotiated land conflict resolution. |
| | Rural institutions and participation | The strengthening of customary local institutions for natural resource management and for disaster prevention and coping is at the core of an ongoing programme of the Rural Institutions and Participation Service. In the context of decentralization policies and shrinking resources in remote rural areas, the programme also assesses options and mechanisms for improved local level interaction between customary/indigenous local institutions and local government authorities and/or other non-governmental actors. The programme focuses on Central Asia (including north-west China) and the Near East and on nomadic and pastoral societies.<br><br>The Service has participated in several activities with the Organization's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. One aim of the project "Apiculture development in Karnataka", 1996-1998, was to develop an ecological and economically sound extension programme for landless and tribal people to reintroduce beekeeping and honey production based income and employment generating activities. The project developed and field tested a field manual on ecologically sound and economically viable practices in bee hunting/keeping and honey gathering, production and processing for landless tribal women's groups. |

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| | | The Service and the Regional Office are also collaborating with the Federation of Savings and Credit Unions in Thailand to develop adapted training materials and approaches for skills development for community groups and cooperatives established by ethnic minority groups in northern Thailand. Again in Thailand, working also with other partners, support has been given for capacity-building of village level women's groups from an ethnic minority to improve the packaging and marketing of their organic farming produce. A third initiative with the Regional Office has been in field project formulation in Maharastra, India, to develop an institutional capacity-building programme for small and medium enterprise development in the five poorest districts with ethnic minorities in the State of Maharastra. |
| | Gender, population and indigenous knowledge | The Women and Population Division provides technical backstopping in both sociocultural research on population issues, including research on the population aspects of indigenous communities, and how gender-specific local knowledge can offer greater understanding about natural resource management (agricultural biodiversity, land, water, mountains, urban agriculture, forests and drylands). Indigenous knowledge is gender-specific and underpins cultural and resource conservation practices, the associated institutions that support these practices and the strengthening of sustainable livelihoods.<br><br>The Division's project "Gender, biodiversity and local knowledge systems to strengthen agriculture and rural development in southern Africa" (LinKS) is not specific to indigenous peoples, but touches on indigenous knowledge and its preservation. LinKS is a regional project being implemented in Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Mozambique whose main aim is to strengthen the capacity of key institutions and organizations to understand and apply farmers' knowledge and experience for the sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture. The project builds on partner organizations' existing activities in this area and supports their ongoing work by:<br><br>Training of field level staff in how to record and document local knowledge and how to use gender analysis and participatory methods for both research and action processes; |

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| | | Grants and technical assistance for research on gender-based differences in farmers' knowledge related to agro-biodiversity conservation; and<br><br>Technical assistance to enhance communication and exchange of information about the value of local knowledge in agriculture within and between communities, with institutions that interact with farmers and with policy makers.<br><br>The project works with a diverse group of partners in each country. These include NGOs, government institutions, universities and training and communications entities. Research is also being undertaken on specific issues of local knowledge and biodiversity conservation. |
| | Research, extension and training | The Research, Extension and Training Division has been involved in, or is planning to carry out, a range of activities related to indigenous issues:<br><br>In Bolivia project activities have been carried out to implement intercultural communication. This has included development of communication systems managed by indigenous people and the production of multimedia training packages in local languages (Guaraní, Chiquitano and Quechua). A case study is also under preparation for publication on a communication system managed by indigenous people with FAO support "Yasarekomo. Autodiagnóstico de una experiencia de comunicación para el desarrollo del pueblo Guaraní en Bolivia." A further case study has been prepared on local communication and power relations within Guaraní communities: "La participación entre bastidores - La comunicación y toma de decisiones entre los guaraníes del Izozog, Bolivia." |

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| | | A study and training exercise on Agricultural and Knowledge Information Systems (AKIS) was carried out in 2001 in sub-Zoba Hagaz in Eritrea with Danida and the University of Reading, United Kingdom. This exercise:<br><br>Identified the information and technology needs of different categories of farmers in the context of their own indigenous knowledge; and<br><br>Trained extension staff in a methodology for participatory AKIS assessments to develop farmer-led extension (advisory) services.<br><br>A study analysing information and knowledge-sharing processes among pastoralists in Eritrea, including innovation and change factors, is under way with the University of Rome's Centre for Development Studies on Indigenous Knowledge and Information Systems (IKIS).<br><br>A field study on the gender dimensions of AKIS is being developed with the University of Sussex, United Kingdom, to be implemented in 2002 in Eritrea or Kenya. The study will identify gender information needs of pastoralist groups on the basis of their indigenous perspectives.<br><br>A case study on government programmes and education issues related to livelihood conditions of ethnic minority groups in northern Thailand is being finalized together with the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. |